Increase and decrease in the forest area in States

1488. SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the total forest cover in the counry has been reduced as per survey conduced by the Government agency.

(b) what are the names of States which have lost forest area;

(c) the names of States which have increased forest coverage;

(d) the reasons for loss or improvement as the case may be; and

(e) steps taken by Government to improve the forest area in the country?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NILAMANI RAUT RAY: (a) Yes, Sir. According to an assessment made by the Forest Survey of India(FSI) using Landset imagery, the forest cover in the country has gone down from 64.20 million hectares in 1981-83 to 64.01 million hectares in 1985-87.

(b) List of States where forest cover has decreased is given in the enclosed Statemnt-I (*See* below)

(c) List of States where forest cover has increase is given in the enclosed Statement II (*See* gelow)

(d) Causes decline of forest cover area:—

(i) Higher demand for fuelwood and timber due to increased population.

(ii) Overgrazing leading to degradation of forest land.

(iii) Raw material requirement of wood based industries.

(iv) Insufficient financial outlays for regeneration of degraded forest lands.

(v) Problem of shifting cultivation.

(e) Steps taken by the Government to improve the forest area in the country include:—

1. The National Forest policy, 1988, lays more emphasis on conservation of forests. There are specific provisions for protection of forests from grazing, fires and encroachment.

2. Forest (Conservation) Act was enacted in 1980 to check diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes, The Act has been made more stringent by an amendment of 1988.

3. A Centrally sponsored scheme has been started to help States to develop infrastructure for protection of forests.

4. Alternative sources of energy are being developed to replace fuelwood in domestic and commercial sectors.

5. Wood is substituted by alternative materials in packaging, railway sleepers, building construction, furniture etc.

6. Import policy for timber has been liberalised.

7. Fiscal incentives are given to industries for wood substitution.

8. Efforts are being made to control shifting cultivation.

9. Guidelines have been issued to State|UT Governments from time to time for protection of forests. Some of these guidelines are as follows:—

(i) To avoid felling of natural forests and where such felling are inevitable for restoration of crop or other silvicultural considerations, it should be restricted to areas not exceeding 10 hectares in the hills and 25 hectares in the plains.

(ii) To consider banning of felling in the hills above 1000 meters, at least for some some years.

(iii) To identify critical areas in the hills and mountains which require protection from felling of forests and need immediate vigourous afforestation.

(iv) To set apart 4 per cent of the geopraphical are as protection area like wild life sanctuaries, national parks, biosphere reserve etc.

(v) Special guidelines have been issued for protection of forests from forest fires.

Statement—I

Statewise decrease in forest cover

S. No.	State/UT.	Forest Cover 1985-87	Forest Cover Decrease	% of
1.	Andhra Pradesh	50194	47911	4·5
2.	Assam	26386	26058	1·2
3.	Bihar	28748	26934	6·3
4.	Gujarat	13570	11670	14·0
5.	Haryana	644	563	12·5
6.	Jammu & Kashmir	20880	20424	2·1
7.	Karnataka	32264	32100	0·5
8.	Kerala	10402	10149	2·43
9.	Maharashtra	47416	44058	7·02
10.	Meghalaya	16511	15690	4·97
11.	Mizoram	19092	18178	4·78
12.	Orissa	53163	47137	11·3
13.	Tamilnadu	18380	17715	3·6
14.	Tripura	5743	5325	7·2
15.	West Bengal	8811	8394	..
16.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	237	205	13·5
17.	Daman & Diu	..	2	..
18.	Pondicherry	8	..	..

Statement—II

Statewise increase in forest cover

S. No.	State/U.T.	Forest Cover 1981-83	Forest Cover 1985-87	% of Increase
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	60500	68763	13·6
2.	Goa (including Daman & Diu)	1285	1300	1·2
3.	Himachal Pradesh	12882	13377	3·8
4.	Madhya Pradesh	127749	133191	4·25

S. No.	State/U. T.	Forest Cover 1981-83	Forest Cover 1985-87	% of Increase
5.	Manipur	17679	17885	1·16
6.	Nagaland	14351	14356	0·03
7.	Punjab	766	1151	51·5
8.	Rajasthan	12478	12966	3·0
9.	Sikkim	2839	3124	10·0
10.	Uttar Pradesh	31443	33844	7·63
11.	Andaman & Nicobarland	7603	76 24	0.27
12.	Chandigarh	2	8	30·0
13.	Delhi	15	22	46·6

Disappearance of IAF MIG-21 Aircraft/helicopter

1489. SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a MIG-21 fighter aircraft mysteriously disappeared from Bhuj air base in the Western Sector around Kutch on 25th June, 1990;

(b) whether another army helicopter was also found missing in Rajouri Sector sometime in mid July, 1990;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof;

(d) whether the missing MIG-21 and the army helicopter have been located, if so, the details thereof;

(e) the number of persons killed in each case separately;

(f) the outcome of the inquiry conducted in this regard;

(g) what is the total number of IAF air accidents during 1989 and 1990 till date stating the main causes identified for the frequent air accidents and the measures contemplated by Government in the matter; and

(h) whether there is any possibility of pilot of MIG-21 aircraft defecting to a neighbouring country; if so, the threat this would pose to the strategy of other such planes with IAF?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) A MIG-21 aircraft was declared missing over the sea in the Gulf of Kutch area on 25th June, 1990.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (e) The MIG aircraft and pilot missing since 25th June, 1990 have not been located despite extensive air and sea search over the area. The Army helicopter was traced within Indian territory, near the Pir Panjal Pass, where it had crashed, resulting in the death of all the five occupants (3 passengers and 2 crew).

(f) In the case of MIG aircraft, the Court of Inquiry was not able to proceed in the absence of material evidence. As per the Court, the aircraft most probably crashed into the sea. A Court of Inquiry has been ordered in to the crash of the Army helicopter.

(g) The information regarding the number of accidents is of classified nature and cannot be disclosed in public interest. There have not been fre-